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**SECTION:** CERTIFICATION

**SUBJECT:** Specific Requirements for First Time Certification Only

**ITEM:** *Timeframes for Processing*

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**Policy** Local agencies shall notify applicants of their eligibility status not later than 20 calendar days from the date of application or, in cases of applicants at special nutritional risk (women eligible as Priority 1 participants and migrant farmworkers and their family members), not later than 10 calendar days following the date of application. Local agencies shall establish office procedures which ensure that participants and the general public are able to contact the agency by telephone or personal visit during normal business hours without unreasonable delay.

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**Extension to notification period** Local agencies may request WIC Branch approval to extend the 10-day notification time frame for applicants at special nutritional risk to 15 days. Such requests must be submitted in writing to the WIC Branch and must be accompanied by a justification. Acceptable justifications for requesting an extension to the processing standards include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Limited number of times available for WIC appointments at a particular distribution site.
2. Local agency staff shortages.
3. Inclement weather.

Agencies may submit requests to extend the notification time period at any time. Approval will be valid through the end of the federal fiscal year during which the request was made. The annual reapplication for funding is one method by which agencies may renew their requests.

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**Scheduling appointments for pregnant women** At a minimum, the women's name and, when possible, either her telephone number or address are required to schedule the first appointment for pregnant women. First schedule appointment shall be defined as an appointment made by a WIC staff person or non-WIC staff (e.g., physician's office, clinic staff) to determine whether the woman is eligible to receive program benefits.

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**Follow-Up required for pregnant women who miss their first Scheduled Appointment**

Local agencies shall attempt to contact each pregnant woman who misses her first scheduled appointment. This requirement includes appointment made by a WIC staff person and non-WIC staff (e.g., physician's office, clinic staff). The attempt shall occur within 30 days of the missed appointment schedule and include:

1. Telephone or writing to the woman.
2. Informing her that she missed her first scheduled appointment.
3. Offering her another appointment.
4. Requesting or confirming her current address.

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**Definition of Date of Application**

The date of application is defined as the date an individual first visits a local agency during clinic or office hours to make an oral or written request for program benefits. Local agencies shall develop procedures which provides for eligibility screening and enrollment in an expeditious manner. This is particularly critical for prenatal women.

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**Employed Participants and/or Rural Areas Residents**

Local agencies shall schedule time specific appointments for each employed individual and/or resident in rural areas seeking to apply for participation in the WIC program. The requirement for employed individuals is to minimize the time each such individual is absent from the work place. No employed applicant and/or resident in rural areas shall be given a "block" appointment (e.g., given a block of time with a group of participants to be seen on a first come, first served basis).

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**Time Frame for Voucher Distribution**

Local agencies shall distribute the first voucher packet to eligible persons at the same time as completion of certification and eligibility notification. Vouchers shall be imprinted with the current date to enable participants to redeem them immediately.

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